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THEATRE WORLD



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Edited by Frances Stephens

January 1947

1946 SAW the theatre boom continuing unabated. No doubt the fact that money remains plentiful while goods are still in short supply accounts for some of the theatres' present prosperity, but the past year has undoubtedly demonstrated that the new interest in the drama has a solid foundation likely to remain unimpaired.

In a year of economic frustration the theatre's achievement is nothing short of spectacular. The fact that even our commercialised stage is more art than industry must account for this: indeed the hint of a strike backstage was greeted with astonishment in a year of endless strikes.

Looking back over the year there are many pleasant memories of unusual productions. In the West End proper there have been worthwhile and successful new plays, including *The Guinea Pig* and *The Gleam*, by the same author, *Frieda*, *Exercise Bowler*, *The Kingmaker*, *The Winslow Boy*, *An Inspector Calls* and *Pick Up Girl*. To these must be added *Crime and Punishment* and the brilliant Old Vic productions at the New, *King Lear* and *Cyano de Bergerac*. The laughs have been provided by, among others, *Fifty-Fifty*, *Clutterbuck*, *Fools Rush In*, *Here Come The Boys*, *High Time*, *The Shephard Show* and *Piccadilly Hayride*, and at least one play, *Message for Margaret*, has given strong dramatic stuff.

It is, however, on the ballet and opera side that there have been the most significant developments. Covent Garden was re-opened and has since been the home of the Sadler's Wells Ballet, who have achieved during the period a remarkable number of new works on a big scale. We have also had visits from one American and two

Over the Footlights

French Ballet Companies. Ballet and opera are forging ahead at Sadler's Wells Theatre and opera at the Cambridge Theatre has further demonstrated that there is now a big public for this Cinderella of the theatre. Ballet Rambert have also continued their most excellent work and London was noticeably stirred by the advent of Berto Pasuka's *Negro Ballet*.

If proof were needed that the theatre has a vastly increased and enthusiastic public we have only to recall the work of such theatres as the Arts, the Mercury, the Embassy, the Lyric, Hammersmith, New Lindsey and Unity theatres. The season of plays by poets at the Mercury has brought us some outstanding works, including *This Way to the Tomb* and *A Phoenix Too Frequent*, while we recall many a happy memory of productions at the Lyric, Hammersmith: plays of the quality of *The Thracian Horses*, *The Brothers Karazamov*, and *The Eagle Has Two Heads* are not easily forgotten. Also at the King's, Hammersmith, there was the brave season by TRT, who gave outstanding revivals of *St. Joan* and *The Electra*.

Happiest augury of all has been the development of children's theatres during the year, for until we instil into our boys and girls an early love of the theatre, vast numbers of them will seek their entertainment only in the cinema. The Glyndebourne Children's Theatre is already many months old and now the Young Vic has entered the field with its first production at the Lyric, Hammersmith.

The year closed most happily with the re-opening of Drury Lane Theatre, where Noel Coward's *Pacific 1860* was produced too late for review this month. F. S.

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New Shows of the Month

"And No Birds Sing"—*Aldwych*, Nov. 14.
 "Caste"—*Lyric, Hammersmith*, Nov. 19.
 "Lady Frederick"—*Savoy*, Nov. 21.
 Sadler's Wells Opera-Ballet—*Sadler's Wells*,
 Nov. 26.
 "Mrs. Dane's Defence"—*Embassy*, Dec. 3.
 "High Horse"—*New Lindsey*, Dec. 3.
 "The Gleam"—*Globe*, Dec. 4.
 "The Fairy Queen"—*Covent Garden*, Dec. 12.

"And No Birds Sing"

THOUGH entertaining in many respects, this play by Jenny Laird and John Fernald fails to grip in its entirety because the authors' aim is never made clear. The main theme appears to be the clash of a woman doctor's interest in her career on the one side and love and marriage on the other. But there is also the equally important theme of the doctor's adopted daughter who is the victim of deep-seated frustrations engendered by her well-meaning guardian's tyrannic love. Then there is the clash of the doctor's modern methods with the local youth in the rather unsavoury district in which she practices, and those of the neighbouring Church dignitaries. The breezy ex-Naval officer who blows on the scene and finally carries the young doctor off her feet is no doubt intended to bind the elements together; but he more often brings a note of farce, however entertaining, into the proceedings.

Nevertheless, it is very easy to enjoy individual performances, especially those of Elizabeth Allan as the lovely if strong-headed young doctor, Harold Warrender as the gay Naval Lothario, Natalie Jordan as Pauline, the adopted girl, and Nigel Stock as Kenneth Tweedie, a most plausible young Scots doctor, newly qualified.

F. S.

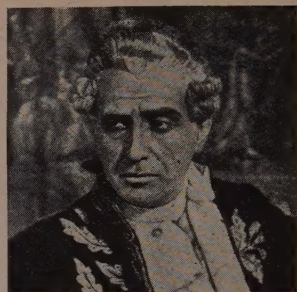


VICTORIA
LOPEZ

the Mexican cabaret star, who appears in Dante's clever mystery revue, *Sim-Sala-Bim* at the Garrick.

MARIANO STABILE

who gives a brilliant performance as Scarpia in the outstanding new production of *Tosca* at the Cambridge Theatre.



"Caste"

IN view of the present vogue of gaslight and bustle plays, Tom Robertson's *Caste* was sure to be revived by somebody and we should all be duly thankful that the Company of Four have done it. Robertson's quality is treated with respect and his message is faithfully repeated. In 1867, when the Bancrofts first put on *Caste*, Tom Robertson, with three stage successes already to his credit, was the coming man in the theatre; *Das Kapital* had just appeared in Marx's own country but had not been heard of in this; and Tennyson was but fifty-eight and his couplet about kind hearts and coronets had been repeated only sufficiently to win general agreement and admiration. The present production revives the tired quotation enough to make us realise what it originally meant. The settings, too, are a joyous reminder that the author was a pioneer of naturalism in the theatre. Strange as it may seem, his plays were presented and accepted as sincere attempts to depict real life characters in real life surroundings. Practical doors and windows there certainly were but the people who opened them all had enlarged hearts and were not the least bit drab. At the Lyric the acting is excellently theatrical in that it expresses genuine emotion that in life has little noticeable outlet. The period characters of d'Alroy, Esther and Hawtree are difficult to portray to-day, but Clement McCallin, Iris Russell and Frith Banbury firmly and beautifully limn them. Bill Rowbotham expands the part of Sam Gerridge beyond its natural and original limits to a point that only the manifest delight of the audience excuses. Something of the same may be said of Brenda Bruce as Polly Eccles. On the other hand, Morland Graham, excellent as Eccles, restricts his performance within narrower limits than his predecessors in the role were wont to observe. Elliot Mason is delightful as a rather unlikely Marquise.

H. G. M.



"The Shephard Show"

Houston-Rogers

"At the Pantomime," a seasonal item in Firth Shephard's successful new musical at Prince's Theatre. (Left to Right): Douglas Byng, Eddie Gray, Richard Hearne and Arthur Riscoe, the four irresistible comedians of the show.

"Lady Frederick"

THIS most effective revival of Somerset Maugham's first big success, with its setting moved back to 1885, has all the elegance and suavity of Oscar Wilde at his best. The superb settings and costumes have an added appeal in these continuing days of austerity, but most pleasant is the discovery of a new and entrancing Lady Frederick who wears the lovely late-Victorian gowns as though to the manner born. Coral Browne dominates the play with the best performance of her career, and shows a fine sense of comedy, particularly in the highly theatrical scene when she disillusions her young admirer by introducing him to the elaborate details of her toilette.

Miss Browne is supported by a clever company, with outstanding performances from Edwin Styles as Paradine Fouldes, Phyllis Dare as The Marchioness of Mereston, and Anthony Ireland as Captain Montgomerie. Vernon Greeves is natural and unassuming as the young Marquis of Mereston, and Patricia Raine a girlishly Victorian Rose Carlisle. Christopher Quest appears as Sir Gerald, Lady Frederick's brother, but we should like to have seen more of Evelyn Roberts, who has the smallish part of Adml. Carlisle. Murray Macdonald has produced

the play with rare smoothness, and due praise has already been given to Anthony Holland's delightful settings and costumes. F. S.

"Mrs. Dane's Defence"

THE slip that brought about the social downfall of Mrs. Dane appears so modest an offence by our modern day standards that it is very difficult to believe wholeheartedly in Henry Arthur Jones' play, which, after witnessing *Lady Frederick*, seemed to cry aloud for treatment *à la* Maugham. The first class cast at the Embassy too often conveyed the same lack of belief in the characters they were called upon to portray, but at least the highly dramatic cross-examination scene in Act III between the Judge and Mrs. Dane was given its full dramatic emphasis by Frank Allenby and Mary Ellis. Indeed, Mary Ellis never loses an opportunity to bring out the inherent tragedy of the situation and invests Mrs. Dane with a sincerity which it is difficult to resist.

Others in the cast convey, with varying success, the socially stifling atmosphere of Society at Sunningwater at the turn of the century with all its taboos and petty scandals. Gillian Lind, though charming, was



EUGENIE LEONTOVICH

who will be remembered as the Archduchess in *Tovarich* ten years ago, is coming over from America to play the leading role in *Caviar to the General*, which she has written in collaboration with George S. George. The piece will be directed at the New Lindsey by Robert Henderson, who produced it in America, and the company also includes Bonar Colleano, John McLaren and Robert Adams.

not always convincing as Lady Eastney, and Peter Croft sometimes found it hard going to do justice to Lionel Carteret, the young man who was too easily diverted from his love for the beautiful Mrs. Dane. On the other hand Ronald Simpson and Mignon O'Doherty were admirably in character as the henpecked husband and his scandalmongering wife, who 'dragged Mrs. Dane's unfortunate past into the open.

This revival, however, is still of interest, for Henry Arthur Jones was a playwright who knew how to present a dramatic situation, and one can see how controversial the play must have been at the time of its first production.

F. S.

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Christmas Shows

IN AND AROUND THE WEST END

- "Aladdin"—Empire, Chiswick.
- "Cinderella"—Players' Theatre.
- "Cinderella"—Golder's Green Hippodrome.
- "Dick Whittington"—Alex, Stoke Newington.
- "Dick Whittington"—Finsbury Park Empire.
- "Drake's Drum"—Embassy.
- Bertram Mills' Circus—Olympia.
- "Hey Presto" (Maskelyne)—Westminster.
- "Jack and the Beanstalk"—King's, Hammer-smith.
- "Just William"—Granville.
- "King Stag"—Lyric, Hammersmith.
- "Land of the Christmas Stocking"—(Mats.), Duke of York's.
- "Mother Goose"—Casino.
- "Peter Pan"—Scala.
- "Red Riding Hood"—Adelphi.
- "Sim-Sala-Bim" (Dante)—Garrick.
- "Treasure Island"—(Mats.), Whitehall.
- "Wizard of Oz"—(Mats.), Winter Garden.

"High Horse"

"HIGH Horse" by Gerard Tyrrell had a successful first night on December 3rd. This comedy's characterisation and dialogue are on Lonsdale lines and are played by a brilliant quartette so that they seem well up to Lonsdale standard, but the plot is negligible. A series of humorous and natural situations is contrived and the author's gift for writing lines that steer a middle course between the epigrammatic and the absurd is thoroughly exploited by the actors. Francis Lister provides most of the fun by his rich rendering of a ripe specimen of the class of conservative country gentleman always called George. He can and does make the simplest remark sound like a caption to an almost unbearably funny cartoon. As his wife, who discomposes him by suddenly breaking out as a novelist, Mary Hinton skilfully and admirably administers a mixture of sentiment and satire very potent in its effect. A young man who has turned a lost love to profit by unbosoming into a purple-splotched best-seller and the young woman who aggravated him into making this literary reputation are well and amusingly presented by David Evans and Kay Bannerman. The décor by Richard Lake was a triumph on its own.

H. G. M.

"The Glean"

THOUGH not displaying the same artistic singleness of purpose evident in *The Guinea Pig*, Warren Chetham Strode's new play should not be missed. *The Glean* deals with another set of topical problems in the same interesting and human way, and only once towards the end of the last Act is there any overwhelming sense that

(Continued on page 10)

London's Ice Show

● Tom Arnold's Ice Revue at the Stoll Theatre provides something unique in West End entertainment, and with the addition of the Cairoli Brothers for the Christmas Season, has taken on a real festive air. The show is produced by Armand Perren and directed and staged by Gerald Palmer under the supervision of Tom Arnold. The charming costumes and décor are by Charles Reading and the ballets by Beatrice Livesey.

(Right): CECILIA COLLEDGE, brilliant star of the revue, is seen in a fine action pose, caught by the Alfa high-speed camera.



The clever corps-de-ballet in the colourful *Ballet des Fleurs*.

(Left): OLIVE ROBINSON and ARMAND PERREN, co-stars in the show, in one of their breath-taking numbers. These two superlative skaters have made a big impression on audiences at the Stoll.

"Mardi Gras"

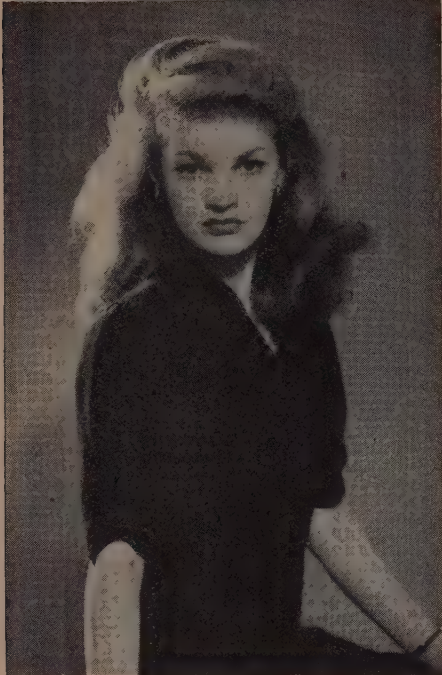
ANDRÉE Howard's new ballet, *Mardi Gras*, produced by the Sadler's Wells Opera-Ballet on November 26th, is an essay in macabre romanticism built within the grotesque framework of the carnival of Mardi Gras, held in Catholic countries on Shrove Tuesday.

A young girl, lured by the sounds of revelry in a cathedral square at midnight, is swept into a nightmare vision which includes her seduction by a Blackamoor, the killing of a boy who attracts her, and the appearance of her own effigy in a coffin sensuously caressed by dwarfs. There are elements in the ballet evocative of *Petrouchka* (Blackamoor and Dancer), *Les Forains* (stage within a stage), *Nocturne* (masquerade) and *The Duchess of Malfi* (coffin and sinister Cardinal), but the choreographer has failed to reanimate these elements from a new imaginative angle. One dance for three classical danseuses in tutu must be the longest and most trite in contemporary ballet, and the choreography as a whole is repetitive and without dramatic inspiration. Nor does the character of the young girl succeed in becoming the centrifugal force in the dream like Celia Franca's enchanting Khadra in her Persian ballet.

There is a restlessness and lack of repose, a needless elaboration, as in all Andrée Howard's recent work, and nowhere does one feel that imagination and economy of movement that make *Death and the Maiden* the most moving, as well as the shortest and simplest, of all this choreographer's ballets. *Mardi Gras* is far too long and one feels inclined to suggest a dinner interval.

With the almost simultaneous production of *Mr. Punch*, *Concerto Burlesco* and *Mardi Gras* one deduces a new trend towards grotesquerie in modern ballet, but measured against such standards as Fokine's living intricacy of pattern in *The Firebird* lullaby none of these works shows a gift for fantastic movement that justifies the choice of material. I am not among those who consider Fokine's *Petrouchka* the greatest dance-drama of all time, but within its own boundaries of puppet-imagery it is a ballet of national scope and atmosphere that will always remain a representative classic of its race and period. The English genius lies in another direction, and for all its faults of immaturity Anthony Burke's *The Vagabonds*, viewed a second time after *Mardi Gras*, seemed to me to show an original force that may lead to a truer artistic expression than the choreographic blind alley of *Mardi Gras* and *Mr. Punch*. *The Vagabonds*, of course, is helped by music of distinction.

(Continued on page 12)



LALAGE LEWIS

is scoring a big success as Melissa, who adds so much to the diverting complications of *Clutterbuck*, Benn W. Levy's comedy hit at Wyndham's.

"The Gleam" (Continued)

the preacher rather than the playwright is holding the stage.

The main theme is the new Health Act as it affects both doctors and patients, and we are taken on to 1949, by which time the scheme is in full swing. Interwoven also is the controversial subject of the new satellite towns. The author is most happy in the actors who have been chosen to put over his ideas. Elspeth March and Wyndham Goldie as the middle class father and mother whose house is swallowed up in the town-planning scheme, are in excellent contrast, and a fine performance comes from John Robinson as Doctor Alan Boyd, the young medico, who, hating the new Health Act, nevertheless, seeing the gleam at the end of the tunnel, decides to co-operate. There are also finely drawn character studies from Harry Ross, as Fred Holt, the local Labour Councillor, Hugh Kelly as Tim Cartwright, the young medical student who nearly throws up his career, and Honor Blackman as Monica, the Cartwrights daughter. Frances Waring is inclined to exaggerate in the role of Hilda, vapid daughter of Fred Holt.

F. S.

The Review of the most entertaining double bill at the Arts—*A Phoenix Too Frequent* and *Fatal Curiosity*—is unavoidably held over.

"The Fairy Queen" at Covent Garden BY AUDREY WILLIAMSON

PURCELL'S *The Fairy Queen*, a masque based on a doggerel version of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, was first produced in 1693, and apart from a production at Cambridge some twenty years ago, has not been revived since. The present version at Covent Garden has been adapted by Constant Lambert, who while preserving the best of Purcell's music, has curtailed the text and re-substituted Shakespeare's original words in most of the dialogue scenes. Only the Titania-Oberon and one of the clown scenes remain: the main entertainment is still concentrated in choral and solo singing and in masques danced for the entertainment of Titania, Bottom and Oberon.

It is right that England should do honour to one of her greatest composers, and since Purcell, apart from *Dido and Aeneas*, did not compose operas in the modern understanding of the term, his stage work, if it is to be revived at all, can only be seen in the archaic form of the masque. The music is lyric rather than dramatic but sweet on the ear, and from the musical point of view the revival is fully justified. The orchestra under Lambert play most beautifully and the choral singing is magnificent. The soloists vary in talent and accuracy of tempo, but here again the standard is on the whole high. Dennis Stephenson, Constance Shacklock, Olive Dyer, David Franklin and Audrey Bowman are particularly successful in preserving the silken musical line and purity of tone that Purcell's music demands. The Hymen duet of Muriel Rae and Constance Shacklock is perhaps the most exquisitely harmonised singing in the masque. The words of most singers, however, are far too indistinct.

If, however, the entertainment must be judged as a whole, quite apart from its musical value, there are obvious defects. There is no homogeneity between the masques, and the Shakespearean thread is tenuous from the start and lost almost completely half-way. Shakespeare, in fact, is butchered to make a scene designer's and choreographer's holiday, and although the first Oberon and Titania scene is almost complete, one misses all the later magic: the rapt poetry of "But we are spirits of another sort" and "Through this house give glimmering light" has vanished with the fun and Pyramus and Thisbe, and the masque ends prettily but inexplicably with a Chinese fantasy and the masque of Hymen. Oberon and Titania are married instead of the absent Theseus, which forces one to interesting speculation about their previous relationship but does nothing to clarify the action.

There is almost enough dancing to fill a major three-Act ballet and Frederick Ash-

ton's task in the limited time available has been a stupendous one. It was inevitable in the circumstances that much of the choreography should lack inspiration, especially since the ballet, which in our day has developed expressive and dramatic forms of its own, is here reduced once again to pure decoration. What surprised me was that for once Ashton appears not to have listened seriously to the music, and most of the *ensembles*, besides lacking pattern, are distractingly unmusical. Helpmann in his *Comus* (some of the music of which was taken from *The Fairy Queen*) showed far more sensitive feeling for Purcell's simplicity and line.

Only a few dances are more than "routine." Of these the Chinese *pas de quatre* of John Hart, Alexis Rassine, Pauline Clayden and Margaret Dale is perfect in style and the hand movements almost Javanese in quality. The whole lovely dance reflects that Oriental placidity of mind the emotion-tossed westerner can only envy. The "Echo" dance of Beryl Grey, Gillian Lynne and Margaret Dale is delicately atmospheric, Moira Shearer in a charming solo is the ideal Phyllis of any Elizabethan lyric poet, and the *pas de deux* of Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes as Spirits of the Air has the aerial lightness and tranquillity of Ashton at his best. Of the choral dances only moments of the Masque of Night and the Winter Masque have real imagination. The last, reminiscent of the winter scene of *Adam Zero*, is superbly led by David Paltenghi in a costume and make-up blanched by hoar-frost.

It is as a musical spectacle that *The Fairy Queen* principally shines and Michael Ayrton's decoration has a glowing splendour. It is heavier in magic than Oliver Messel's butterfly wings and gossamer in the Old Vic *Midsummer Night's Dream* nine years ago, but the scenes of the rising sun and enchanted lake, and the final *chinoiserie*, have a transparent beauty. Although all the costumes are not ideal the general effect of lighting and design is of a costly eighteenth century tastefulness. Real water springs in glittering silver jets from ornate fountains, and Oberon, in bridal white, feathered headdress and a cloak of blended wine and royal blue, is more Red Indian prince than Shakespearean elfking. No Hiawatha at his Albert Hall Wedding Feast has looked more resplendent.

The immortals are better acted than the clowns, who with poltroon stomachs and circus make-up lose all the rich humanity of Shakespeare's mechanicals. Not even Harcourt Williams can marshall them into funniness. Joan Sheldon, a dancer who distinguished herself as Titania in a Sadler's Wells Ballet broadcast in Germany last

year, is here rewarded with the small speaking part of a fairy, which she acts with a grave fantasy. James Kenney is a graceful boy Puck, but my joy in welcoming back to the stage that fine actress, Margaret Rawlings, cannot blind me to the fact that this richness of voice and majesty of mein belong, not to Titania, but a more fiend-like queen. Her beauty, however, is radiant, and at the words "But she, being mortal, of that boy did die" she does achieve a poignant note of fairy wonder at mortality. Robert Helpmann, in a costume which precludes the glimmering firefly fairyhood with which he and Oliver Messel invested his earlier Oberon, partners her with royal grace. His silent movements and strange, luminous make-up belong to another world, he speaks the verse with a musical blend of the imperious and the *fey*.

Judged as ballet *The Fairy Queen* is entirely retrogressive (also, I'm afraid, a bit of a bore!), and a warning of the kind of entertainment which may begin to dominate the scene if the cult of the past fostered in certain balletomane quarters gains ground. There are danger signs already that the pure dance spectacle at Covent Garden is to be given precedence to the English ballet's individual dramatic works, and for a period of two months no ballets other than 19th century classics are to be performed. It is, however, welcome

news that Massine is to produce his comedy masterpieces, *Le Tricorne* and *La Boutique Fantasque*, for the company, and himself dance the leading roles. And although Helpmann's departure in February makes earlier production impossible, his *Adam Zero*—the only work yet produced at Covent Garden which has used the visual resources of the theatre without losing touch with drama and emotion—is to be revived on June 2nd, the date of his return.

"Mardi Gras" (Continued)

Leonard Salzedo's score for *Mardi Gras* is harsh and charmless and Hugh Stevenson's setting recalls the classic austerity of *Mourning Becomes Electra* rather than the baroque romanticism his theme demands. The ballet was excellently danced by the company and particularly by Nadia Nerina, a young dancer from South Africa, who as the Circus Dancer displayed a classical nobility and attack of high promise. As the young girl Anne Heaton infused a nebulous character with a haunting beauty of arabesque and a feeling for mime which may one day make her the most outstanding Flower Girl in *Nocturne* since Margot Fonteyn. She has some of the qualities of Fonteyn when young: musicality and grace, wistfulness and style, and the compact body and heart-shaped face of the ballerina in embryo.

A. W.

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The colourful and exciting duel scene in Act 1. Cyrano de Bergerac, soldier, poet, adventurer, has interrupted a performance at the Hotel de Bourgogne. The beautiful Roxane (Margaret Leighton) looks on at the discomfiture of his opponent, Vicomte de Valvert (Peter Copley).

(Right): Ralph Richardson as Cyrano.

“Cyrano de Bergerac”

AT THE NEW THEATRE

THIRD production of the Old Vic Theatre Company's third season, the Rostand classic provides the opportunity for as brilliant a production as Tyrone Guthrie has yet given us, and in Cyrano a role worthy of Ralph Richardson's genius.

The play is given in the Brian Hooker version but the emphasis throughout is laid on the romantic aspect of this story of a physically unattractive hero who loves in vain the beautiful lady of his dreams. To this end Mr. Guthrie has given us a crowded canvas, brilliant in colour, and the lovely scenery and costumes designed by Tanya

Moiseiwitsch are a real feast for the eye.

This is, of course, Cyrano's play, but the supporting company to the most minor part, here play with a zest which well befits the seventeenth century scene. Margaret Leighton's Roxane, Michael Warre's Christian, Nicholas Hannen's Ragueneau, and Alec Guinness' Comte de Guiche are but some of the outstanding performances that remain in the mind.

Few actors could give us as many-sided a Cyrano as Ralph Richardson, who has added another brilliant piece of acting in fine contrast to his Peer Gynt and Falstaff of previous seasons.

PICTURES BY JOHN VICKERS



Duenna (Janet Joye) : A message for you, From our good cousin . . .

After the duel and Cyrano's prowess in tackling a hundred men, Roxane sends word that she would like to meet him the next day. He, beside himself with joy, thinking that perhaps she loves him after all, arranges to meet her at Ragueneau's Bakery.

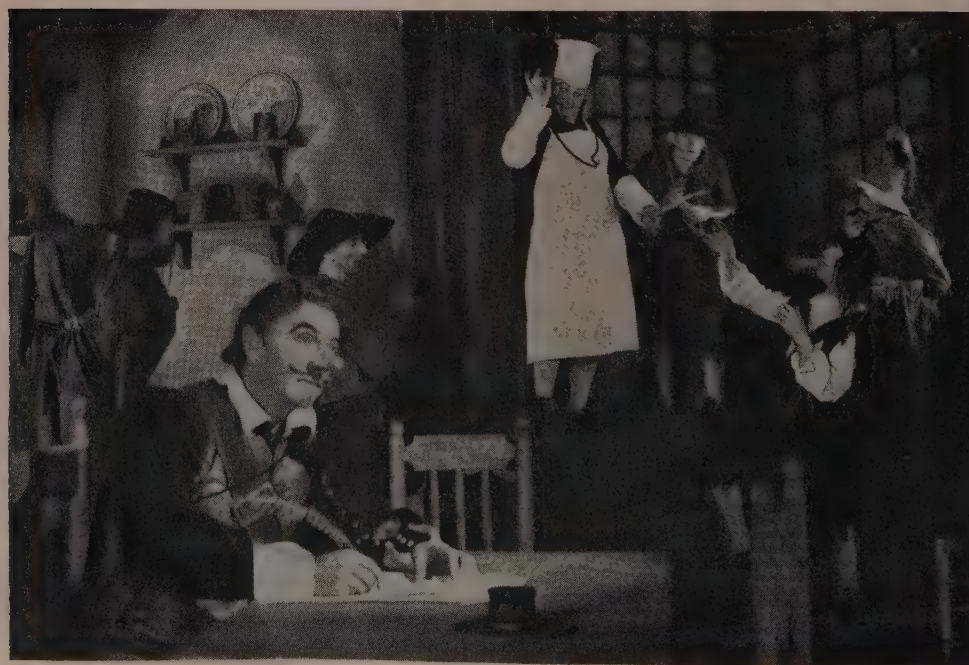
(*Left*) : Cecil Winter as Le Bret.

Act II

(*Below*) : *Cyrano* : "Looking upon you, I grow faint with fear."

The next day, Cyrano, awaiting the arrival of Roxane, writes her a love letter.

(*Centre*) : Nicholas Hannen as Ragueneau, the pastry-cook poet.



Roxane : And such a man!
He is proud—noble—young
—brave—beautiful—

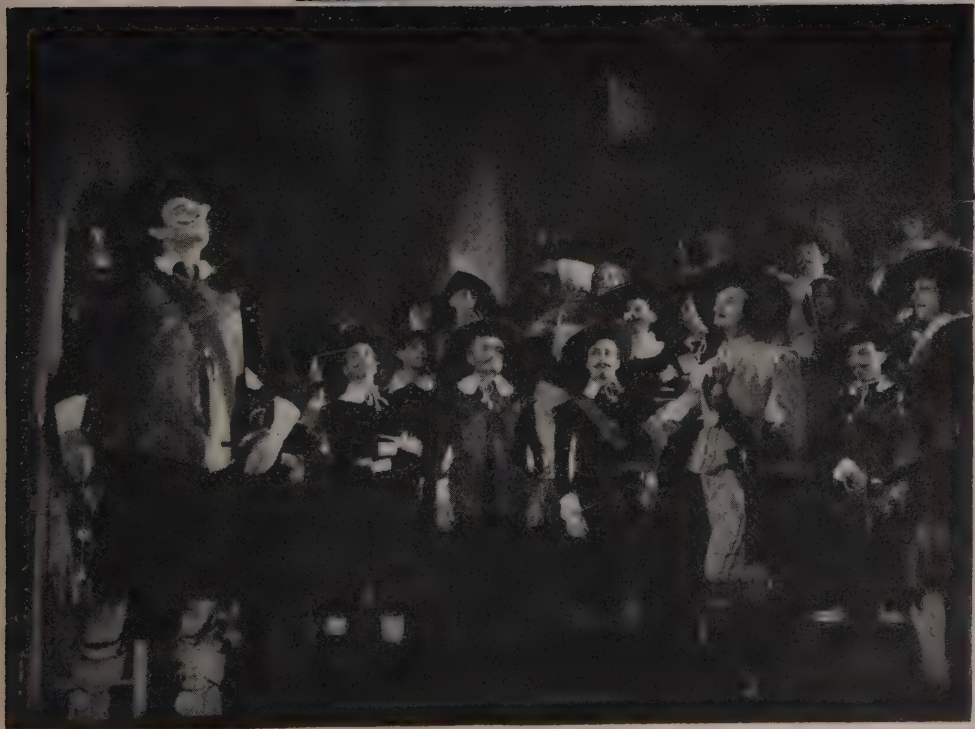
Cyrano : Beautiful!—

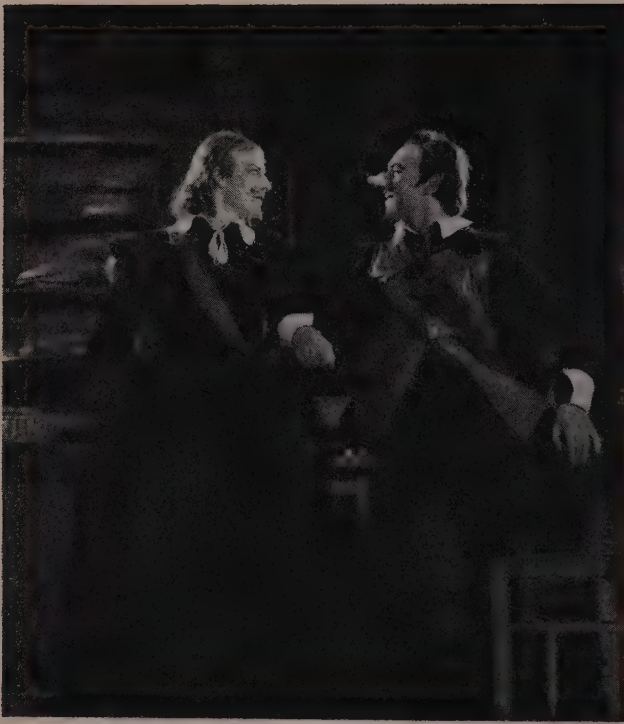
Cyrano realises that it is not he that Roxane loves, but Christian de Neuville, and her reason for seeing Cyrano is to ask him to befriend the young man now that he has just joined the Guards.

(Below) :
De Guiche : Your duel yesterday amused my uncle, The Cardinal. I might help you there.

De Guiche tries to entice Cyrano to his following, but he will not forsake his fellow Cadets of Gascoyne.

(Right) : Alec Guinness as Comte de Guiche.





Cyrano : Would you dare repeat to her the words I gave you, day by day?

Christian (Michael Warre) tries to pick a quarrel with *Cyrano*, who, to everyone's amazement, refuses to accept the challenge. Later, *Cyrano* tells *Christian* that *Roxane* loves him and the tongue-tied young man is persuaded to use *Cyrano's* inspiration for his love-making. And first he gives *Christian* the letter he wrote at the pastry-cook's to send to *Roxane* in his name.



Act III.

Outside *Roxane's* house.

Roxane : Gather your dreams together into words!

Christian, away from his mentor, proves a most disappointing lover, and *Roxane*, leaving him, chides him with his lack of ardour.



Roxane : Then come! Gather your sacred blossom.

In the shadows below Cyrano enacts a wonderful love scene. Roxane is entranced, and Christian climbs to her side to claim the kiss.



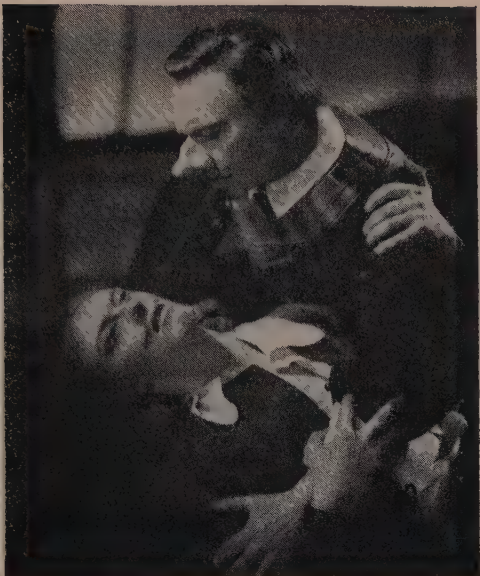
Cyrano : From the moon, the moon! I fell out of the moon!

The wily de Guiche has come for Roxane, but the faithful Cyrano detains him for a quarter of an hour with some magnificent nonsense, while Roxane and Christian are married.



Roxane : Take care of him for me.

By way of revenge de Guiche sends Christian to the war and he is snatched away from his bride immediately after the ceremony.



Act IV. Scene 1.

Roxane : Ugly even—I should love you still.

Roxane brings food to the beleaguered company of Carbon de Castel-Jaloux at the Siege of Arras. She has a passionate reunion with Christian.

Cyrano : I have told her : She loves you.

Unknown to Christian, Cyrano has been sending in his name a love letter to Roxane every day. But when Christian is killed he knows that he can never tell Roxane the truth.



Cyrano : I have two deaths to avenge now—Christian's and my own!

Cyrano, rallying around the wounded Carbon de Castel-Jaloux, Chief of Cadets (Harry Andrews), leads his comrades to victory.

Act IV. Scene 2.

The Park of the Convent occupied by the Ladies of the Cross, at Paris. 1655.

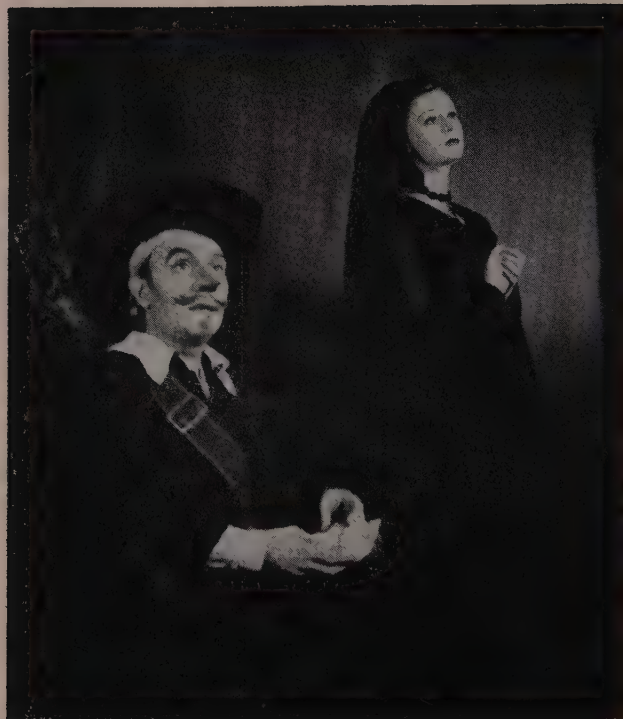
Cyrano : "Farewell, Roxane, because to-day I die—"

Cyrano, who has been visiting Roxane in her convent retreat each Saturday for fourteen years, comes on this day mortally sick, for he has been wounded by a falling log, instrument of some unknown enemy at Court. He has been living these many years in abject poverty, but his spirit has remained undaunted. On this day he reads to Roxane the tattered last letter of Christian, and, seeing that he still says the words when the light is fading, Roxane realises that he was the writer.

Roxane : You shall not die! I love you!

Cyrano : No—that is not in the story! You remember when Beauty said, "I love you," to the Beast? That was a fairy prince, his ugliness changed and dissolved, like magic... But you see, I am still the same.

The closing moments of the play.



"The Winslow Boy" AT THE LYRIC THEATRE

PICTURES
BY
ALEXANDER
ENDER

The drama-
tic scene in
Act I when
Mr Robert
Lorton
(Emlyn
Williams)
cross-exam-
ines Ronnie
Winslow
(Michael
Jewell) be-
fore deciding
to defend
his case.



PRODUCED last May, Terence Rattigan's play has now reached its 250th performance and continues to be one of the most likeable straight plays in the West End. Based on the well-known case of the Osborne cadet who was expelled on a charge of stealing a five shilling Postal Order, the

story comes to us as a warm and absorbing sidelight on life in a middle class Kensington home in the leisurely two years prior to the 1914-18 war. The play is flawlessly produced and in the hands of a brilliant company Mr. Rattigan's finely drawn characters live before our eyes.



The toast "Catherine and John."

On a Sunday morning in July the Winslow family gather to drink the health of the engaged couple, Catherine Winslow (Angela Baddeley) and John Watherstone (Alastair Bannerman).

Also in the picture (*L. to R.*) are Jack Watling as Dickie Winslow, Clive Morton as Desmond Curry, the family Solicitor, Madge Compton as Mrs. Winslow, Kathleen Harrison as Violet, and Frank Cellier as Mr. Winslow.

Arthur: Why aren't you in your uniform?

Mr. Winslow, a stern father, is heartbroken on hearing that his young son has been expelled, but when he is convinced that the boy is telling the truth and is innocent of the charge, he resolves to fight the case.

Sir Robert: You know that the Admiralty sent up the forged postal order to Pearce — the greatest handwriting expert in England?

Sir Robert Morton, famous lawyer, who is called in to defend the boy, puts him under a gruelling cross-examination, at the end of which he too is convinced of the boy's innocence.



Fred : Quite still, please.

Arthur Winslow's case against the Admiralty has aroused widespread interest in and out of Parliament. In the picture are Brian Harding as Fred, a newspaper photographer, and Mona Washbourne as Miss Barnes, a woman journalist.



Catherine : I love you, John, and want to be your wife.

The prolonged publicity attaching to Ronnie's case displeases John Watherstone's conventional parents, who now wish him to break off his engagement.

Catherine : An honourable member described that this evening as a piteous little figure, crying aloud to humanity for justice and redress. I wish he could see him now.

Nine months later the case still drags on and has become a first-class political issue in the House.





Grace : You're destroying yourself, Arthur, and me and your family besides—and for what?

The strain begins to tell on Arthur Winslow who has made big financial sacrifices in his stubborn determination to clear his son's name.

Arthur : I have made many sacrifices for this case. Some of them I had no right to make, but I made them none the less. But there is a limit, and I have reached it. I am sorry, Sir Robert. More sorry, perhaps, than you are, but the Winslow case is now closed.

Sir Robert : Balderdash!

Sir Robert refuses to allow Arthur to abandon Ronnie's cause.



Grace : Did you see anybody interesting in Court, dear?

Five months later and the affair of the Winslow boy is reaching its conclusion. Arthur Winslow's health has broken down in the long struggle, but Catherine, a courageous example of the new politically-minded emancipated woman, maintains her high hopes, though her engagement to John has been broken off.

Desmond: The appointment of Lord Chief Justice. He turned it down, simply in order to be able to carry on with the case of Winslow versus Rex. Strange are the ways of men, are they not? Goodbye, my dear.

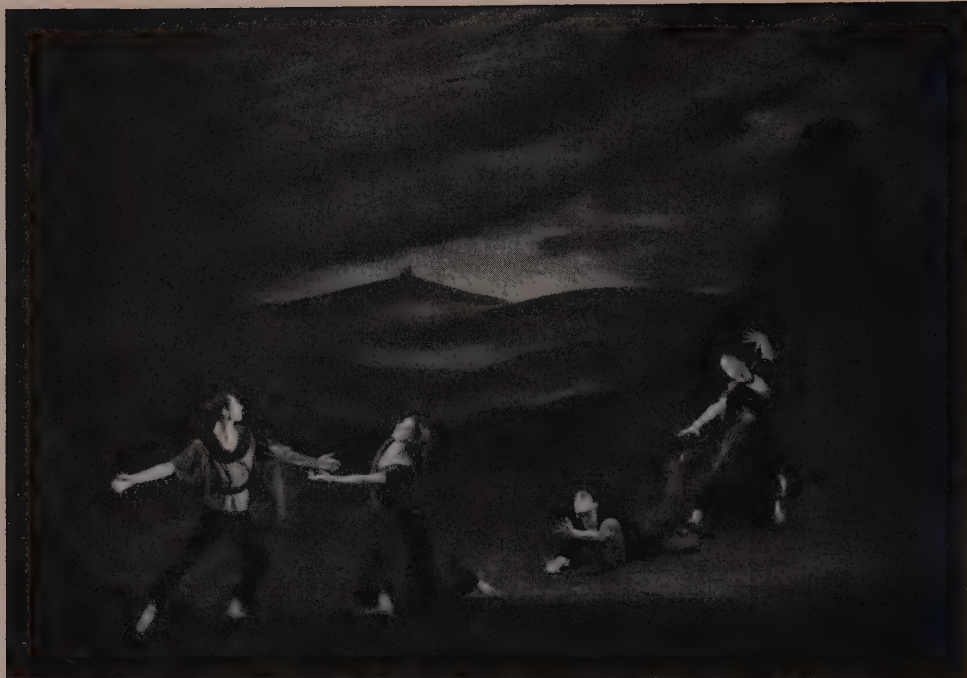
Catherine: Goodbye, Desmond.

Desmond Curry, whom Catherine regretfully refuses when he proposes to her, throws a sidelight on the character of Sir Robert, whom Catherine had thought hard-hearted and ambitious.

Arthur: Ha! Perhaps I had better say what I really feel which is merely: Thank God we beat 'em.

A moment towards the close of the play. Sir Robert's brilliant defence has won Ronnie Winslow's case, the boy's name is cleared, and the right of an individual citizen vindicated.





SADLER'S WELLS OPERA BALLET

"The Vagabonds"

PICTURES BY EDWARD MANDINIAN

Among the Sadler's Wells Opera Ballet Company's recent new ballets, undoubtedly the most outstanding is *The Vagabonds*, with choreography by Anthony Burke, to music by John Ireland. Mr. Burke's first major work reveals great talent and, enhanced by the atmospheric decor by Vivienne Kurnot, should prove a popular permanent addition to the repertoire at Sadler's Wells. (Above): Alan Carter as The Lover, June Brae as The Vagabond Girl, Leo Kersley as The Other Man and Pamela Chrimes as His Woman.



June Brae and Alan Carter who dance brilliantly in the leading roles.



Another glimpse of the four dancers in a ballet which displays a fine sense of dramatic harmony.

“*Message for Margaret*” AT THE DUCHESS



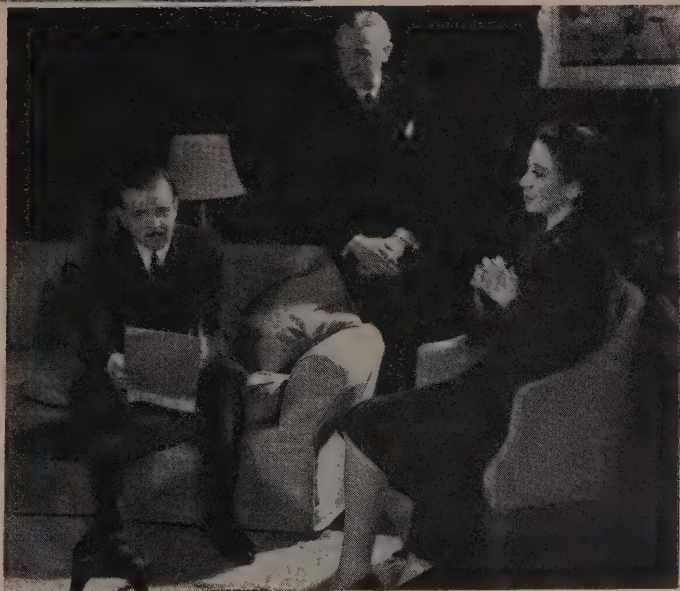
● James Parish's new play has provided a splendid vehicle for the acting genius of Flora Robson. As the devoted wife of a publisher who discovers after his death that her husband had a lover, Miss Robson gives a highly sensitive performance of great dramatic power. Barbara Couper, who is magnificent as the vain and cold-hearted lady in the case, is the ideal foil. The play was first produced at the Westminster and is now at the Duchess, where it has settled down to a solid success.

(Left):

Adelyn Chalcot (Barbara Couper) hands Margaret Hayden love letters which Margaret's husband had written to her, to prove that he had been her lover.

PICTURES BY

ALEXANDER BENDER



(Right):

Margaret, now directing her late husband's publishing business, listens to Robert Chalcot's poems while Stephen Austin, the firm's co-director, looks on. Robert has been badly treated by his wife, Adelyn, who, incidentally, is also known by the name of Margaret.



Margaret Hayden is beside herself with jealousy when she learns that her husband's lover is to have the child she had longed for herself.



Margaret: I don't know what's happened; what's the matter with me. I don't know what to do; where I'm going—where my mind's going—

Stephen: Hush. Now listen. You didn't kill Robert.



The dramatic scene after the death of Robert Chalcot, who has fallen from the balcony of Margaret's flat. Margaret had planned in her jealous hatred that Robert's wife should have been the victim, and is beside herself with remorse.

(Left):

Adelyn: But will you really want it as much as you think knowing it's my child?

A scene towards the end of the play when Margaret begs Adelyn to give her the child when it is born. Margaret's mind gradually regains its balance and Stephen Austin takes a hand when he cunningly proves before curtain fall that his partner's last message "for Margaret" was indeed for his wife and not for his lover.

Plays—Ancient and Modern

by ERIC JOHNS

THE glittering revival of Maugham's *Lady Frederick* at the Savoy is such magnificent entertainment, and as it brings Coral Browne back to the West End in the best part of her career, one feels it would be churlish to ask the management why they did not provide a really new play as successor to *The First Gentleman*.

For all that, I tackled Coral Browne about it. Young authors are always asking me to take their plays to actresses of my acquaintance with a good word on their behalf. Most of them hope to make a living by their pen, and as many are decidedly intelligent young men it seems hard that a forty-year-old Maugham success should occupy the stage of a theatre which could just as easily be utilised to make the reputation of a deserving youngster.

"I was more than anxious for a modern play," explained Miss Browne. "After the run of *The Last of Mrs. Cheyney* I waited as long as eighteen months for one. For a whole year I read five new plays a week, but failed to discover anything suitable for production. I am not saying that they were all bad plays. They were not; but for one reason or another they happened to be unsuitable for my particular purpose. Failing to find a new work, I turned to old successes. Then I heard that Ethel Irving scored the triumph of her career at the Court in 1907 with a play by young Maugham, which ran for more than a year and made his name as the most successful dramatist of the day. As soon as Firth Shephard sent me a copy of *Lady Frederick* I read it and did not need much persuasion to play the part!

"As a dramatist, Maugham is such a magnificent constructionalist. Unlike so many modern writers, he writes so much more than a brilliant first act. He writes a brilliant second and a brilliant third act as well. Far from fizzling out, his inspiration lasts right up to the final curtain. His plays display an uncanny sense of progression which one can almost graph out on squared paper. It is always dead right.

"The public enjoy Society plays in this rough and tumble world of post-war reconstruction. They like escapist fare. They have become rather tired of the many colourless plays that ran so long during the war years. They want to see Lady Frederick's luxurious suite at the Hotel Splendide in Monte Carlo. They want to see the grand people who revolve about her—the Marquis and Marchioness of Mereston, Sir Gerald O'Mara, Captain Montgomerie and Admiral Carlisle. They want to see such people behaving as it is no longer possible for one to behave in this restricted world.

"When the play was produced in 1907,



Angus McBean

CORAL BROWNE as Lady Frederick.

it was dressed in the fashion of that day, but for this revival Maugham suggested thrusting it back in time to 1885, which is a far more picturesque period as far as dress is concerned, and consequently has more glamour for people living in an age of clothing coupons and bread units. For all that, creating the clothes was by no means an easy matter. My first act dress was made out of a pair of curtains discovered in a Chelsea antique shop, and my second act dress was built up out of lengths of wide ribbon, left to a friend of mine by her grandmother.

"By choosing to play in a revival, rather than in a new play I do not infer that modern dramatists are inferior to the great names of a generation or more ago. For one thing modern dramatists have not had a fair chance. The times in which they live are against them. Compared with men of Maugham's youth present day playwrights, I mean youngsters still in their twenties, don't enjoy a happy home-life conducive to creative work. They find concentration infinitely difficult in a world of restriction

(Continued on page 37)

Whispers from the Wings

BY
LOOKER ON

HERODIAS, Lady Macbeth and Mary Tudor are colourful personalities, but not the sort of people one would choose to live with. In her time Flora Robson has played them all. In fact, apart from her comedy part in *Touch Wood* at the Haymarket, she has invariably appeared on the stage as a tragic figure. An actress gets on fairly intimate terms with the part she is playing. She lives with it. On that account I wondered if Miss Robson ever felt unhappy with tragedy queens as her constant companions.

As Miss Robson manages to keep these unhappy heroines at arm's length, they have no detrimental influence on her private life. Oddly enough, she is at her happiest off-stage when playing tragedy, which she finds more satisfying. To her mind a light comedy part, though well within her accomplished technical range, would be something of a waste of time. Tragedy is more to her liking, and sends her home at night with the glorious satisfaction of a job well done. She enjoys making an audience laugh, *en passant*, in a serious part.

Although Miss Robson's private life is uninfluenced by the parts she plays in the theatre, her stage characterisations are distinctly coloured by the events in her own life. One of her finest creations was in *A Man About the House*, as Agnes Isit, whose Italian husband tried to poison her by gradual administration of arsenic. No one who saw the play will ever forget Miss Robson's pathetic struggle, trying to walk with limbs already in the grip of the drug. Medical men wrote to congratulate her on the stark realism of the scene. Other players described the experience as almost unbearable.

Few realised that at that time Miss Robson was devotedly nursing her brother who was suffering from a form of paralysis in her Buckinghamshire home. The tragedy in her own life heightened her dramatic conception of Agnes Isit. By being so close to her brother she knew what he was thinking. She appreciated the mental outlook of one faced with such a tragedy, and on that account was in a position to intensify the pathos of the situation in the play.

She agrees with Stanislavsky that an actress must get into the mood of a scene before making her entrance. In her own case it is best accomplished by contemplating the unkindest blows of fate in her own life. It is the same in the film studio, where the artist so rarely builds up to a climax, as in the theatre. Tears may have to be photographed before she has acted



Alexander Bender

FLORA ROBSON

the situation causing them. To produce them Miss Robson closes her eyes while the wardrobe-mistress adjusts her gown, her dresser gives a last minute touch to her coiffure, and the electricians focus the lights. Then, when the director shouts "Shoot" to the cameraman, she opens eyes filled with the necessary tears.

Both Miss Robson and Barbara Couper, who plays her deadly enemy in *Message for Margaret*, at the Duchess, are believers in realism on the stage. If Miss Robson fails to slap her rival's face hard enough in the play, a complaint is registered at once, because Miss Couper has discovered that a good stinging slap is an excellent stimulant for histrionics. Miss Robson instantly responds, and some magnificent acting follows.

Relaxation is most essential in so busy a life as Miss Robson's, particularly at the moment, when she is filming by day and playing a highly emotional part in the West End at night. To avoid confusion she has to keep the two parts in separate pockets of memory. She hates discussing her film part in the theatre and her *Message For Margaret* part in the studio. She takes her mind off her work now and again by knitting socks for her adopted son, reading a little in bed, and doing cross-word puzzles, being particularly pleased about the latter achievement, as she has now graduated to *The Times*. Gardening is her chief joy in the light evenings, and last season her efforts produced some particularly fine marrows, tomatoes, anemones and irises.

Still Running

'Fifty-Fifty'

● Larson Brown's amusing farce still continues to pack the Strand Theatre, where it has just passed its 350th performance.

The picture shows Harry Green who gives a grand performance as Joe Baur, and Cameron Hall as Mr Dawson.

Scene by
WALTER BIRD

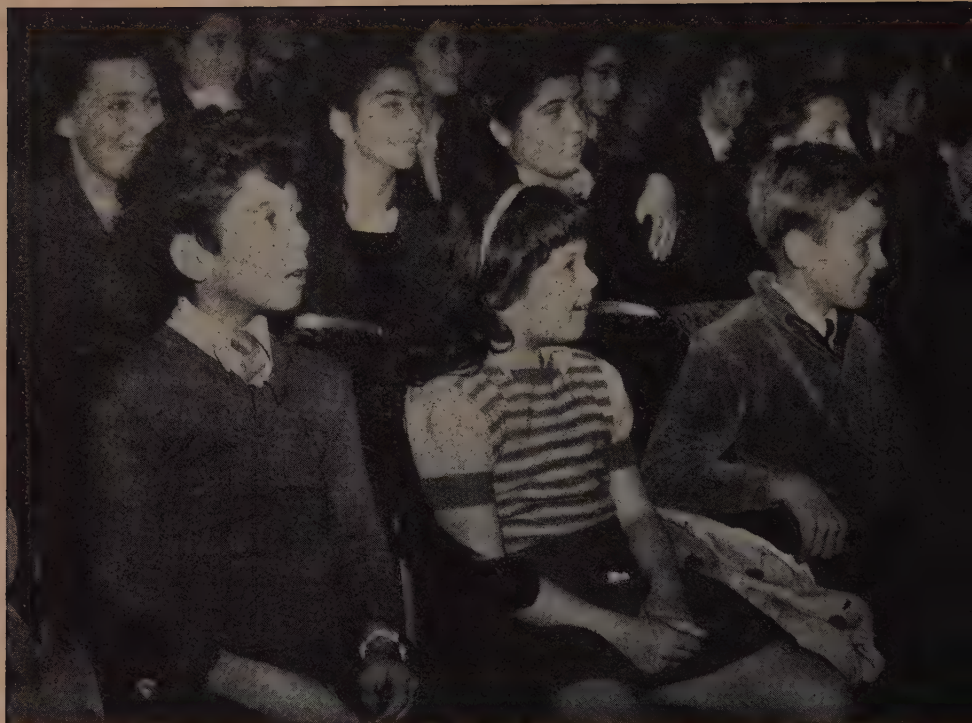


The Shop at 'Gly Corner'

● A scene from the ever popular 'The Shop At Gly Corner', which has reached its 100th performance at the St. Martins Theatre. In the picture (L. to R.) are Viola Lyell, Arthur Young, Jean Colin, Peidre Stewart and William Roderick. Incidentally, Arthur Young, the 5th Descius Weiss, has won the warm approval of the critics for his never performance in this role.

Scene by
BARRATT'S





Children's Theatre

● At last the country is waking up to the idea that there should be special theatres for children, and The Children's Theatre, under Glyndebourne Management, has already accomplished a splendid work since it staged its first production *Great Expectations* at Toynbee Hall last January. The plays tour all over the country and local Education Authorities everywhere are showing keen interest, as they see in the Theatre a means of lifting the cultural standards of the children, and of making them realise what a rich heritage they have in our classical literature. In the picture above is a glimpse of a typical children's audience during one of the performances.

PICTURES BY
MAURICE KAYE



(Left): A scene from *Tobias and the Angel*, the popular second production of The Children's Theatre, which gives an idea of the excellent standard of production reached. This play, too, has toured throughout England. The third production is *She Stoops to Conquer*, now in rehearsal.

RADA Sees it through

by HUGH BARTY-KING

THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF DRAMATIC ART IN WAR-TIME AND AFTER

"WE never closed."

That claim, I imagine, is one of the few things the Windmill Theatre and the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts can have in common.

War broke out just at the end of everybody's summer holidays, RADA'S included. The Academy was to have assembled for its thirty-fifth year at the end of September. Of the 246 students enrolled, 95 turned up; the annual Treasury grant of £500 was withdrawn as a war economy (offset by a gift of £1,000 from Bernard Shaw). It was restored, however, in 1943 and raised to £2,000 in 1945.

When the air raids began more and more students left, until at one time there were as few as 50. Yvonne Owen, now in the new Lonsdale play *But for the Grace of God*, was one of those 50, together with Alan Badel (now her husband), who won the Bancroft Gold Medal in 1940, parachuted into France on D-Day minus 1, and is now out in the Middle East playing Othello in an ABCA Play Unit company. Several of this year's Stratford company included students from those dark days, notably Hugh Griffiths and Douglas Seale.

The staff, usually 60, was reduced to 12—68-year-old Frederick Ranalow being among the ones "who never missed a day." The terms were reduced from 11 to 10 weeks each; there were two classes instead of ten; the *RADA Magazine* lapsed. The Principal took on part-time work as General Secretary of ENSA.

On 17th April 1941 the Big Theatre in Malet Street was destroyed by a land mine. Five students and one member of the staff were fire watching, but no one was killed. It was the Easter holidays. All the props and sets were lost, and the microphone apparatus installed by the BBC in 1926 was demolished—and has since been replaced. For three weeks a squad of 20 staff and students carried out the rubble bucket by bucket into Gower Street. On May 15th RADA opened for the Summer Term—one week late only—with four usable rooms and the Little Theatre "letting in the daylight all round the cyclorama."

The latter, as the safest place in the building, was the shelter to which everyone repaired on hearing the warning bell. A "private line" from the conveniently-placed Ministry of Aircraft Production office next door direct to the Little Theatre gave the All Clear.

All production took place in this theatre, and the "public performances" in West End theatres like the Aldwych, the Lyric and the Strand. In 1943 the "Annual



King Harry surveys the ruins. Members of an American Forces' Course in their *Henry V* costumes, have a look at the ruins of the RADA theatre in Malet Street which was hit by a land-mine on April 17th 1941. A fund is being raised to rebuild it.

Matinée" was held in the little theatre in Gower Street, and the Queen, who is a patron of RADA, went along to see it and "remained to tea." During the V1 attacks many of the productions were of necessity half-dressed, ordinary clothes making up the missing costume pieces. For a time in those days students worked on an early morning rota to clean the place out.

By 1942 attendance had risen to 130, and they were able to make a five-week tour of RAF hostels under CEMA with *Nine Till Six*, and at Christmas took a Nativity Play to home forces for ENSA. Throughout the war productions of the "matric" Shakespeare play were given to LCC school-children—both in London and in the reception areas in the country—and these performances continue now at Institutes and theatres in London.

In 1942 also, as a gesture of gratitude for the hospitality given by North America to English evacuees, the "Kinsmen Trust Scholarships" were instituted, giving two Americans or Canadians a free two-year course at the Academy. These were generously donated by Lady Louis Mountbatten and the late Mr. George Arliss.



Miss Fabia Drake surrounded by an all-American student-cast of *Henry V*, which was one of the American Forces' Courses in the summer of 1945 at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art.

Since the war has ended large numbers of Americans have passed through the Academy. The Training Within Civilian Agencies Branch (blessed title!) of the US Army Information and Educational Programme offered a nine-weeks' course at RADA. Some 70 men and women from the American forces became temporary RADA students under this scheme. In *RADA Magazine* Sergeant Leonard Freeman tells how on 15th July 1945 he received orders from the 7th US Army Headquarters to report for "temporary duty" on 30th July to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, London, from Germany. "Years from now, when we've forgotten the other experiences, we'll remember those nine wonderful weeks at RADA," he writes.

In other words he enjoyed himself, and the word seems to have got round out there. Many people have come over from the States specially, now the war is over, to enroll at the Academy—Lois Maxwell, one of them, did her course, decided to stay, and is now appearing in Ivor Novello's revival of *Our Betters* at the Playhouse. Twelve Americans are among those who started term in October this year.

By 1945 numbers at RADA were back to normal—more than normal, in fact, as was only natural. PARADA, begun 18 months ago at the British Drama League theatre by Miss Dorothy Saunders, for 20 years RADA's registrar, from being the Preparatory Academy to RADA became its overflow, and moved to Highgate.

Some of the 1945-46 star pupils now before the public are Aubrey Woods, 1945 Kendal prizewinner, who plays Smike in the forthcoming *Nicholas Nickleby* film, Patricia Plunkett now in *Pick-Up Girl*, Jean Wilson, 1944 Gold Medallist, in *Crime and Punishment*.

When I saw Sir Kenneth Barnes, the Principal, in his room at the Academy it was the first day of the term, the beginning of the forty-second academical year of continuous activity. He was amazed at the huge number of people who had applied for entrance.

"I was prepared for a considerable increase in the number of applicants," he said, "but not for this. Three hundred and seventy-four was far larger than I had anticipated. We only took 250 before the war you know, and it's not as if we start from scratch each academical year. About half of the people who were here last year naturally stay over for the second year."

Sir Kenneth's dilemma, however, was solved by the quality of the applicants not coming up to their quantity. Just less than two-thirds of those who applied failed to reach the required standards at the entrance tests. Even so, the classes will be larger than usual this year.

The sooner the big theatre is rebuilt the better. Sir Kenneth told me he was launching a campaign to raise the £25,000 needed, in addition to the sum granted by the War Damages Commission, to build the sort of theatre he wanted. Mr. Geoffrey Norman, who designed the original theatre in 1921, is now dead, and Mr. Alister Macdonald, architect son of Ramsay Macdonald, has been asked to draw up new plans. These were accepted by the Council of RADA in October and the various licences are now being applied for.

The old theatre held 280; Sir Kenneth wants the new one to hold 400, to have larger wing space, and more room for workshops. Above all he wants it so that an ancient Greek, an Elizabethan, an 18th Century or a modern play can be presented on it with equal ease. There would have to be an apron stage on a lift.

But many students will have passed across the boards of the little theatre before there is a Big Theatre again. In the meantime Autumn Term 1946 has started—and with more of a "flap" than usual. In three days staff and students had to rehearse and perform an hour's television programme for Alexandra Palace entitled "How to Make an Actor."

"Television?" I hear Squire Bancroft saying, "Television? What the d——'s that?"

It's RADA moving with the times..

Echoes from Broadway

by Our American Correspondent

E. MAWBY GREEN

DURING the past month, the 1946-1947 theatrical season in New York reached the height of activity with productions of the latest works from the minds of many of America's foremost prize-winning dramatists: Maxwell Anderson, Lillian Hellman, George Kelly, George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart; plus the arrival of the newly-formed American Repertory Theatre.

For Maxwell Anderson's *Joan of Lorraine*, Ingrid Bergman left Hollywood at the peak of her popularity. Like Mary Grey, the actress she portrays in the play, she has always wanted to play Joan of Arc and being thoroughly convinced of the soundness of Mr. Anderson's play, his characterisation of Joan and his interpretation of her faith for the world to-day, Miss Bergman put Hollywood behind her—for six months. And the result of this collaboration is new laurels for both author and star and a rewarding evening for those playgoers who can pull enough strings to procure tickets.

Mr. Anderson has said: "I have always wanted to write a play about a play in rehearsal, because I have wanted an audience in the theatre to share the excitement of seeing a play come to life on a bare stage," and *Joan of Lorraine* is the happy fulfilment of his wish. When the curtain goes up, the play within a play is in its third week of rehearsal and pretty soon we are made to realise that the star, Mary Grey, is unhappy with the way the author in his hotel room is turning out the revisions. He is stressing the fact that Joan was aware that the Dauphin was evil, with which conception Miss Grey is in violent disagreement. She argues with the producer-director (Sam Wanamaker) that Joan could not have compromised with evil—even to attain a greater good. The director's answer is that every day we must compromise with evil and he illustrates it by pointing out that this production of "Joan of Arc" depends on his being willing to accept black market money, deal with a shady theatre owner, put up with dishonesty in the box



CORNELIA OTIS SKINNER

as Mrs. Erlynne in the Broadway production of Wilde's *Lady Windermere's Fan*, for which Cecil Beaton duplicated the exquisite London settings and costumes. Mr. Beaton also appears in the play as Mr. Cecil Graham. Our correspondent reviewed the production last month.

office, etc, etc., and his show is typical of conditions that other shows on Broadway must contend with if they are to be seen and heard. He strictly maintains this production of "Joan" is worth the compromise. It is not until late afternoon when Mary Grey is rehearsing the last scene (now in costume) just before Joan goes to the stake that she sees the author's practical point of view and decides to play the part as written and stick with the show.

Miss Bergman is an ideal Joan, bringing to the role her famous radiant quality and honesty as an actress. She also makes a very attractive and believable person of

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Mary Grey, the intelligent actress with high ideals. The suggested settings, lighting and costumes are by Lee Simonson and Margo Jones is credited with the direction for the Playwrights' Company.

Seven years ago Lillian Hellman created the Hubbard family, Regina, Oscar and Ben, for her powerful play *The Little Foxes*, produced and directed by Herman Shumlin, which told how an unchecked capitalism in 1900 "devoured the earth and the people on it." And these rapacious Hubbards who were not even safe from each other's greed, are again the subject of another play by Miss Hellman, *Another Part of the Forest*, this time produced by Kermit Bloomgarden, which takes place twenty years earlier, in 1880, and tells how these Hubbards got that way. Well, it isn't surprising, for Marcus Hubbard (Percy Waram), their father, was an even bigger scoundrel than any of his children and Lavinia Hubbard (Mildred Dunnock), their ineffectual mother, was awfully close to insanity. However, *Another Part of the Forest* is not the equal of *The Little Foxes* as a play. Never one to shun a melodramatic device to build around, Miss Hellman overdoes it this time. Melodramatic horror is piled upon melodramatic horror as the eldest son Ben (Leo Genn—better known on the London stage) "gets the goods" on father and blackmails him into giving him the Hubbard fortune. None of this is quite believable, for Miss Hellman's hand is too plainly seen manipulating the characters and situations, and while you give her your attention she never succeeds in gripping your emotions.

For the first time Lillian Hellman has directed her own play and she has done a first-rate job, getting particularly fine performances from the cast which includes one Broadway debut, Patricia Neal, in the important role of Regina, played in *The Little Foxes* by Tallulah Bankhead, and Margaret Phillips as Birdie, the southern aristocrat who in *The Little Foxes* became the secret drinker played so memorably by Patricia Collinge.

George Kelly, author of *Craig's Wife* and *The Show-Off*, returned to the Broadway scene last season with the short-lived but provocative *The Deep Mrs. Sykes*. This season he has the Theatre Guild starring Ina Claire in *The Fatal Weakness*, which

in spite of divided notices, looks like a hit.

This gay comedy is centred about the fascinating Mrs. Paul Espenshade, who can be perfectly sensible and intelligent as she straightens out her obnoxious daughter's faltering marriage and yet is incapable of doing anything about her own because she is a complete sentimentalist. When she learns that "the other woman," a female osteopath, has had to work hard all her life and never knew romance until her own husband, Mr. Espenshade, came along, she melts. Not only won't she fight back, but she follows their illicit romance with the greatest of sentimental pleasure and as the curtain comes down she's actually sneaking off to sit in church and weep at their wedding ceremony.

Many people have found this theme and character to be unbelievable, but we would be more inclined to call it so feminine as to be illogically logical. And with Ina Claire lending her incomparable comic talent to the title role, *The Fatal Weakness* is easily the best comedy of the season.

George S. Kaufman, who has co-authored many of the most popular American comedies with Moss Hart, teamed up with screen writer Nunnally Johnson to write the book for the musical *Park Avenue* which Max Gordon is presenting. The idea of satirising the multiple marriages and divorces of the so-called social set, proved to be much healthier in the talking than in the execution. After the first half hour the gags run thin, the situations become repetitious and unfortunately there is nothing sensational enough in the Arthur Schwartz music or Ira Gershwin lyrics to save the show. Leonora Corbett, in her first appearance since her tremendously successful American debut as the ghost in *Blithe Spirit*, co-stars with Arthur Margetson, and her reputation is still intact.

The French prophet of the philosophy known as Existentialism, Jean-Paul Sartre, has also divided the critics. His fascinating and terrifying play of three lost souls in Hell, *Huis Clos*, playing in London as *Vicious Circle* and as *No Exit* here, has been both highly praised and outrageously dismissed by some facetious reviewers as being too French, too chi-chi and too boring to bother writing sensibly about. This

(Continued on page 39)

THE GUILDHALL SCHOOL OF MUSIC & DRAMA

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and frustration. Dramatists of the older school had far more leisure and freedom, and on that account I am convinced that it must have been easier writing a play in 1907 than in 1947.

"Many of the modern plays sent to me had good ideas, but so many were not quite good enough. Too often they were photographic pictures of the times—housing problems facing newly-weds, or difficulties of life in occupied countries. They are all burning questions of the day, persistently discussed at great length in the Press and in Parliament, but surely the playgoer does not want to pay to hear the pros and cons all over again.

"So frequently these new plays presented unsurmountable casting difficulties, as far as men were concerned. Good actors are hard to come by. The war has played havoc with the young actor's career. Actors now in the early thirties have had a large and vital slice cut out of their youth. So many people playing in repertory theatres before the war, inevitably heading for London, found themselves in the Army instead of the West End. Now, seven years older and disillusioned, they are still unknown in the West End, and have no desire to go back into the provinces to slave away at weekly "rep" once more. It is too much like going back to school, with chances of stardom ebbing further away each successive year. The problem will sort itself out in due course, but not without many a heartbreak for the actor and many a headache for the casting director.

"My choice of *Lady Frederick* was not simply a question of taking the line of least resistance. I tried, and tried hard, to find a new play, for my own satisfaction and in the interest of the playgoer who is always delighted to make the acquaintance of a new dramatist. I felt I could wait no longer than eighteen months for a modern writer to provide a suitable play, so I dusted Ethel Irving's old part, which, with its make-up scene in the last act gives me what is probably the most spectacular part I shall ever have the luck to play. All the same, I am still hoping for a new play by a new author, but until that happy day arrives I thank Maugham most sincerely for providing me with his delightful comedy."

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The nineteenth annual general meeting of the Gaumont-British Picture Corporation Ltd. was held recently in London, Mr. J. ARTHUR RANK, JP, the chairman, presiding.

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The report was adopted.

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Southport Little Theatre is owned by the Southport Dramatic Club, but the organisation takes a wide view of its responsibilities. Thus, they welcome, in the practical form of a low rent and all facilities, the productions of neighbouring groups. Their own production policy includes such plays as *Dear Octopus* and *The Light of Heart* this season.

For the younger people, however, an arrangement has been made for a visit by the Children's Theatre Ltd. to give ten performances of *She Stoops To Conquer* in the week of March 24th next. They will entertain as guests for the event some four thousand boys and girls from local schools.

This is introducing the theatre to a new generation on promising terms. Competing with the distractions of modern life, the stage must lose no opportunity of winning fresh adherents. From schoolchildren, through youth clubs and organisations, to adult interest, the amateur stage has a clear-cut policy to pursue, and local and civic enterprise of the Southport example is to be commended to others.

On January 22-25 the City Opera Club is producing Mozart's *Impresario* and Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, two works not often seen. Details of the club are obtainable from the Secretary at 83 Bishopsgate, EC2.

Another unusual production was at Cripplegate in December, when Anglo-Arts (Drama) Club gave Kathleen Boutall's *Guilty*, an adaptation of Zola's "Therese Raquin." This play was produced at the Lyric, Hammersmith, during the war.

Three one-act plays from H. F. W. Deane & Sons are *Easy Exit*, a thriller for women, by Valrose Lindley (6 w.); *Satan in Technicolor*, by John Coningham (4 m., 1 w.), with a Hollywood theme; and *Hearts of Oak*, by John Odams (4 m., 3 w.), a country dialect play in the Village Drama series.

The "Ad Astra" Group of Ealing (Hon. Secretary, Phyllis Caffyn, 6 Queen's Road, Ealing, W5), are presenting an original new intimate revue, entitled *First Offence*, at the Twentieth Century Theatre, Westbourne Grove, on the 17th and 18th of January.

This enterprising Company is always seeking new writers and in particular playwrights of experimental drama. Among their forthcoming productions will be a fantasy in which poetry and music are blended in a dramatic theme.

Echoes from Broadway (Continued)

latter attitude is a little bewildering to us, for we do not believe you have to be a drama critic or have any knowledge of what Existentialism is all about to recognise M. Sartre's bold theatrical talent, his gift for quick, revealing dialogue and incisive delineation of character. The philosophy expounded in *No Exit* is not startlingly original and we do not know whether it is a tenet of Existentialism or not. It is simply that each man has a moral responsibility to his thoughts and his actions and is responsible for his own salvation.

The performances of the small cast is uniformly excellent. Claude Dauphin, one of France's foremost actors, plays Cradeau, the coward and collaborator; Annabella gives her best stage performance to date as the lesbian and Ruth Ford is equally effective as the sensualist and infanticide. John Huston's direction is exacting and Paul Bowles' adaptation quite splendid except for a few American colloquialisms that ring false when spoken by the French members of the cast.

Actress Ruth Gordon and author of the successful comedy *Over Twenty-One* has written an autobiographical play called *Years Ago* which Max Gordon is presenting with Fredric March and his wife, Florence Eldridge, starring as Miss Gordon's parents. It is a sentimental period piece taking place in Wollaston, Mass., about 1914 and tells how Miss Gordon *nee* Ruth Gordon Jones escaped becoming a physical education instructress and got to New York to study for the stage. It is of the nostalgic *Life With Father*, *I Remember Mama* school, but not as completely conceived or as satisfying, but sure of a successful engagement.

England's Florence Desmond had the misfortune to appear as the Fairy Godmother in a vulgarisation of the Cinderella story called *If The Shoe Fits*. It was a shoddy affair all around except for Miss Desmond's superb impersonations of Claudette Colbert, Bette Davis and Tallulah Bankhead, which stopped the show.

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